United Nations A/60/948–S/2006/550

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 July 2006

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixtieth session
Agenda item 14
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 19 July 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward to you the address of Fuad Siniora, Prime Minister of Lebanon, to the Diplomatic Corps that was delivered on 19 July 2006, in Beirut, to launch an urgent appeal to the international community for an immediate ceasefire and for humanitarian assistance for Lebanon (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 14, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Caroline **Ziade**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 19 July 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Address to the Diplomatic Corps
by the Prime Minister
H.E. Mr. Fuad Siniora
Grand Serail, Beirut, 19 July 2006

I have convened the diplomatic corps in Lebanon today to launch an urgent appeal to the international community for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and assistance to my war ravaged country. You are all aware that seven continuous days of an escalating Israeli onslaught on Lebanon have resulted in immeasurable loss: the toll in terms of human life has reached tragic proportions: over 1,000 injured and 300 killed so far; over half a million people have been displaced; in some areas, the hospitals have been crippled and are unable to cope with the casualties; there are shortages of food and medical supplies; homes, factories and warehouses have been completely destroyed; UN facilities in Maroun El Ras and Naqoura have just been shelled, so have been army barracks and posts of Joint Security Forces; a civil defense unit has been wiped out and foreigners are being evacuated. As I speak, the trauma, the desperation, the grief and the daily massacres and destruction go on and on. The country has been torn to shreds.

Is the value of human life in Lebanon less than that of the citizens of other countries?

Can the international community stand by while such callous retribution by the State of Israel is inflicted on us?

Will you allow innocent civilians, churches, mosques, orphanages, medical supplies escorted by the Red Cross, people seeking shelter or fleeing their homes and villages to be the casualties of this ugly war?

Is this what the international community calls self defense? Is this the price we pay for aspiring to build our democratic institutions? Is this the message to send to the country of diversity, freedom and tolerance?

Only last year, the Lebanese filled the streets with hope and with red, green and white banners shouting out: Lebanon deserves life!

What kind of life is being offered to us now?

I will tell you what kind: a life of destruction, despair, displacement, dispossession, and death.

What kind of future can stem from the rubble?

A future of fear, frustration, financial ruin, and fanaticism.

Let me assure you that we shall spare no avenue to make Israel compensate the Lebanese people for the barbaric destruction it has inflicted and continues to inflict upon us, knowing full well that human life is irreplaceable.

You want to support the government of Lebanon? Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, no government can survive on the ruins of a nation.

On behalf of the people of Lebanon, from Beirut, Baalbeck, and Byblos, to Tyre Sidon and Qana, to each and every one of the 21 villages at the southern border, declared a no-go zone by Israel, to Tripoli and Zahle, I call upon you all to respond immediately without reservation or hesitation to this appeal for an immediate cease-fire and lifting the siege, and provide urgent international humanitarian assistance to our war-stricken country. I would also like to thank the international organizations and the friendly countries that have already extended their valued help and thank as well those who are preparing to do so.

Excellencies

We the Lebanese want life.

We have chosen life.

We refuse to die.

Our choice is clear.

We have survived wars and destruction over the ages.

We shall do so again.

I hope you will not let us down.